The Beginning

The first owner of the corner was John Gibbert, daughter of Manchester Village, who acquired the property, known as the U.S. Government in 1855. The original 1853 plat map of Manchester indicates that a barn was situated somewhere in this land parcel near the mill dam. The second plat map (1857) expanded the village northward along what is now Main Street across Uncle John’s Farm, and provided the first reference to a “Building on Ann Arbor Road” and the current alignment of the “four corners.”

In April 1844, John D. Beddard acquired the property and subsequently sold a small portion of it in 1846 to Chauncey Walbridge. In 1850, Dr. Amariah Conklin purchased this parcel, included a building Spring Street “occupied by Cadwell & Austin as a Meat Market,” and was the first reference to a building occupying this corner, and may have been the “Bar” reference in the earlier survey. The only known photograph of this building is shown in Figure 1. The “meat market” was the white, gable-end structure on the right side of the photograph, with a horse and carriage in front of it. This photo dates from 1902, when he housed Dr. Conklin’s medical office, two years before the building’s demolition and rebulid.

The Manchester Historical Society, Antiquarian, and a second-person name Austin. As many have also operated here. Paul P. Minchew’s Chauncey Hallbridge took over in the mid-1860s. The only other business operating in this building in 1869 was Dr. Conklin’s medical office, with Carrol’s office front and the meat market in back.

Drs. Amariah and Ebenezer Conklin

Dr. Amariah Conklin was born in 1823 in Amana, New York, the son of Dr. Elmer W. and Lucy Conklin. The couple had moved to his family to Sharon Township in 1819, where he practiced medicine and farming until his death in 1851. Amariah graduated from the Medical University of New York, and practiced medicine and surgery in Manchester where he enjoyed an extensive patronage from 1849 until his death in 1880.

He partnered with his son Ebenezer in the practice of “Reformed Medicine,” also known as scientific medicine. Though educated in the Old School, they never approached the use of mercurials, arsenic, blood-letting and other barbarisms in vogue. They adopted the new methods of natural or holistic treatment, and were the only ones to do so for many years in this region of Michigan.

After Dr. Conklin established his medical practice and the Meat Market continued in the 1860s, further development on the corner stalled until May 1861. John Kief then sold ½ acre of land south of the Conklin office/meat market was sold by Cowan to John W. Cowan in October 1854 to John W. Cowan. Cowan, once the property and subsequently sold a ½ acre of land south of the Conklin office/meat market was sold by Cowan to John W. Cowan in October 1854 to John W. Cowan. Cowan, an ex-Confederate soldier, invested heavily in the town and from 1860 on, Cowan expanded and developed the area behind the current Dairy Queen. In the 1880s-1890s, the former Jaynes home and storage building then served as a warehouse and wholesale market.

Frederick “Fritz” Buss and Adam J. Wurster

With the construction of Dr. Conklin’s new office, and the improvements to the Burtless business, centered on this northwest corner. These businesses included organs, sewing machines, hardware, carriages and harnesses. In addition, they advertised themselves as gunsmiths, and sold and repaired farm implements.

In September 1899, the Wurster Brothers continued their investments, buying all the lots on Ann Arbor Street to the river, including the former Ebenezer Conklin Building (then apartments) and the A&B Grocery. The store operated here until the mid-1970s. As of October 2016 is being repurposed into a full service grocery.

Rapid Growth Along Main Street (Exchange Place) – 1870–1900

William Burtless

William Burtless was another entrepreneur with many business and government roles in 19th century Manchester. Burtless was born in Bridgeport Township in September 1842. He moved to Manchester and purchased a 50% interest in the Southern Washtenaw Mills, as well as another existing two-story wood frame building built in 1870. He moved into the building and at the edge of the mill pond.

The Barn and Office Building on Ann Arbor Street

The Wurster Brothers continued their investments, buying all the lots on Ann Arbor Street to the railroad. On August 31, 1899, the Manchester Enterprise reported, “The frame of the Wurster Bros. Co.’s Annex on Ann Arbor Street is being raised this afternoon.” This is the first reference to the former white barn which existed at 180 Ann Arbor Street, purchased by the Village of Manchester in 2011. By July 1900 the company was selling coal from this location. In October 1902, Wurster Bros. bought timber from the railroad grant to build a coal building adjacent to the barn. They demolished the barn and the brick corner building. In September 1899, Adam Wurster converted the Jaynes building from its former wood storage site into an office, which eventually became the home attached to the barn, and operated on the property in 1902 and 1903; and office. Wurster sold the property to a partnership of Ebenezer Conklin and Charles Barnette.”

In September 1899, the Wursters acquired the Jaynes building from the former wood storage site on a property that eventually became the home attached to the barn, and operated on the property in 1899 and 1900. The company maintained ownership of the building until May 1922, when it was sold to Oscar Barnette, a 43-year old farmer from Sharon Township and former market operator. He ran the business with his wife Ruby.

The Barn is located at the northwest corner of Ann Arbor Street and Main Street. The Barn and Office Building, originally called the “Barn and Office Building on Ann Arbor Street,” was built in 1869 and converted to a full service grocery by July 2016. The Barn and Office Building is a November 1963 view down Main Street of the former Ebenezer Conklin Building (then apartments) and the A&B Grocery.

C. F. Smith Grocery/Mingus Market/A&B Grocery

In 1899, the two corner buildings on Main Street were demolished, to make way for a “storefront” super market. The C. F. Smith Grocery was founded in Detroit in the 1920s and used modern economies-of-scale and efficient warehousing methodologies, promoting themselves as “low-price” stores. It initially occupied the corner warehouse building, and constructed the current market in 1906. The store remained under the ownership of the Smith family until 1954, when it was purchased by Marilyn Mingus. The store was renamed the Mingus Market, and after 1980, was the A&B Grocery. The store operated under the Mingus Market name until the mid-1970s.

The building has held a variety of businesses over the years, and as of October 2016 is being repurposed into a full service restaurant and eatery. The building remained standing from the corner 1857 period.